Patronage to tobacco growers

6312. SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether any representation has been made to Government to extend similar patronage to tobacco growers of the country as is prevalent in other tobacco growing countries around the world;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) what steps Government are taking to ensure that Indian tobacco growers are not at disadvantage when compared to foreign tobacco growers; and

(d) the measures taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) and (d) Tobacco Board has been taking the following steps for the benefit of tobacco growers:

(1) Various schemes are being implemented for improving yield and quality of FCV tobacco and reducing cost of production so as to make Indian tobacco more competitive in international markets.

(2) Tie up with Banks is being arranged for supply of credit for tobacco cultivation and curing.

(3) Internal marketing system for FCV tobacco was improved with the introduction of auction sale. This ensures correct weighment and classification, competitive prices and prompt payment of sale proceeds to the growers.

(4) Board plans the FCV tobacco crop size so as to match demand and supply with a view to ensure remunerative prices to the growers.

Studies by tobacco research institute

6313. SHRI YERRA NARAYANASAMY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether various Tobacco Research Institutes under your Ministry have studied the possibility of raising appropriate tobacco crop in black soils in West and East Godavari district of Andhra Pradesh;

(b) whether it is a fact that tobacco was extensively cultivated in area with black cotton soil in upland West and East Godavari district till recently;

(c) if so, what are the reasons for abandoning such areas from tobacco cultivation; and

(d) whether any steps would be taken to protect tobacco farmers of that area?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) Central Tobacco Research Institute (under Ministry of Agriculture) has been conducted studies.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) Tobacco cultivation has not been abandoned. However, cultivation of FCV tobacco has been reduced in 1993-94 compared to 1992-93 due to following reasons;

(1) Glut situation in world markets.

(2) Uncertainties regarding Russian market.

(3) Large carry stock with Indian traders.

(4) Near stagnant domestic demand.

(d) FCV tobacco farmers were advised to take up alternative crops.

Identification of tribal farmers for tobacco cultivation

6314. SHRI YERRA NARAYANASWAMY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal under Government's consideration to